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cessary, for the mere fool can coin a lie; and a lie is the beginning and end of a humbug. Intellect indeed would be an insuperable obstacle in this *honourable* course, as it would chidingly and incessantly suggest the baseness, as well as meanness of it, together with the incurable contempt, with which through it every qualification in the character becomes infected. I would now ask those, who seem commencing their imitative career, is such a character desirable? are lies honourable? or, is that to be imitated, which by openly violating the fundamental principles of morality, proclaims the last stage of besotted folly?

It appears fully, hence, that the humbugger is, in the perfection of the character, a liar, foolish, stupid, and idle. This surely is no enviable character; and to a man, who feels the charms of truth, there must be much annoyance in beholding them so neglected.

The displeasure, which is usually felt by those, who are the object of this wretched burlesque of wit, ought to be exchanged for laughter, as certainly *the joke*, if *there be any*, in such things, is against the person who is anxious to prove himself worthless, and not against him, who, ignorant of the *joker's* real character, has received him as worthy. Consistently with this view, when I began the consideration of the subject, I had resolved on treating it in a ludicrous manner, and devising some ridiculous nickname that might stick to the *worthy joker* and make him an object of just notoriety.

But if we consider the matter with due seriousness, we should rather feel compassion for those wretched creatures when we see them abuse the gifts of providence, and pervert to the service of folly and actual vice, what was intended to lead them to the acquirement of lasting advantages. Reason was given to man to guide him in his duty, and not by its perversion to be subservient to the purposes of depravity.

Let me have the sanction of your opinion on this subject, and then I shall have a hope, that some attention will be paid to these well meant

BELFAST MAG. NO. IV.

representations of your friend and servant.

Rockville.

MOROMASTIX.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

THOUGHTS ON THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

THE Printing Press has been justly stiled, "the vehicle of all knowledge;" a Spanish gentleman travelling through England a few years ago, upon hearing of the cruel and harsh treatment in prison, that some Englishmen endured, for political publications, observed how far more humane it would be to prevent the obnoxious publications, than to permit them to be printed, and then punish the persons concerned; but an Englishman, who was present, replied, "this would be too open a violation of the liberty of the Press."* the Spaniard, no doubt, thought that the government of his country ordered things better than to have the name of the liberty of the press, and then make truth a libel.

The Emperor, Napoleon, has locked up the French press, except when hostile manifestoes are to be issued: then, indeed, there is a form of consultation in the cabinet. The senate, the hall of legislature, the tribunate, all ring with denunciations against the unhappy prince that he is about to dethrone; and even the ministers of the altar are obliged to join in the cry of war. The passions of the people of that country so easily excited, are roused to frenzy.

There can be no stronger proof of the want of the liberty of the press in France, than what has been lately exhibited to our view with respect to Spanish affairs; an insurrection which the *Moniteur* now tells us broke out in May, was not noticed in that paper, until the 6th of September, when the details of the French army's operations during four months, are given to us by order of the government. It appears that our late governor general of India† the

* See Espriella's Letters from England.

† See a series of letters, addressed to the Marquis of Wellesley, late governor general of India, including a correspondence with the government of M D

Marquis Wellesley issued an edict to regulate the publication of Newspapers, which placed them under restrictions similar to the Paris papers. One of the regulations of the Marquis was, that "no paper shall be published at all, until it shall have been previously inspected, by the secretary to the government, or by a person authorized by him for that purpose." The secretaries are to be guided by rules, in revising the newspapers, part of which we have here transcribed to show a specimen of them: "they are to prevent the publication of all observations on the *state of public credit*, or the *revenues* or *finances* of the company; all observations respecting the embarkation of troops, stores, specie, respecting naval or military preparations, respecting the destination, or expectation of any ships; all alterations respecting the *conduct of government*, or any of its officers, civil or military, marine, commercial, or judicial; all statements with regard to the *probability of war or peace* with any of the native powers. They are to prevent the re-publication of such passages from the *European newspapers* as may tend to affect the *influence and credit* of the *British power with the native states*."* This thralldom of the press, has assisted the British government, in India, to make and unmake Princes, as well as it has assisted the ruler of France in the same pursuit in Europe; and the Marquis of Wellesley has been accused of cruel treatment to some of the native princes. By Mr. Pitt's bill, "the governor, or president of the council, may, upon his single pleasure, seize and secure any British subject in India, of whatever rank or situation, and upon the accusation of only one person, cause him to be thrown on shipboard, or imprisoned, *until there shall be a convenient opportunity* of sending him to England." This act of par-

Bengal; and a narrative of transactions, involving the annihilation of the personal freedom of the subject, and the extinction of the liberty of the press, in India. By Charles Maclean, M. D.

* See Monthly Review, for November 1806.

liament was no doubt called a strong measure, but it is a sure symptom of a weak and feeble government. Those writers who seem to be acquainted with the *oude* transaction, represent it in such a manner as to excite the indignation of their readers against the oppressors of that oppressed Prince. The conduct of the government of Madras, in raising to the Musnurd of the Carnatic a more distant branch of the reigning family, in exclusion of the legitimate successor, has been characterized by Mr. Sheridan, "as one of the most unjust, inhuman, and atrocious acts that ever stained the honour of the British name, in India: yet the documents, on which this charge is founded, have lain for years on the table of the House of Commons, without any decision having been founded on them; a charge which involves the character of the East India Company, and its servants, the credit of the government, the vigilance of the Parliament, and the honour of the Nation.*

The cruel exclusion of this lawful prince, is called to our own mind by the late transactions of Bonaparte in Spain; the same lawless and unprincipled ambition marks both; in both cases flimsy and absurd pretences were used to facilitate those acts; the one blames French influence and intrigue in Hindostan, the other says that English gold, and the agents of England have caused all the misfortunes of Spain: both point out the happy advantages that must result from their system. In all the revolutions in India, a change of dynasty is the only change for the people, there is no amelioration of their condition; this also resembles the plan of Napoleon. The cruel and oppressive treatment which an Indian prince received, was attempted to be justified by Mr. Dundass (now Lord Melville) upon the pretext that he was not the legitimate successor, and now the French Emperor adopts the same plan, by getting the queen of Spain to bastardize Ferdinand, and the French press is shut up to answer these purposes in the same manner that the Marquis Wellesley ordered the press

* See the Carnatic question in a letter to a member of Parliament, and the remarks of the Monthly Review.

in India to be shut up to answer the like purposes; no wonder then that the family of Napoleon, as well as the civil and military officers of India, should have equipages shining like meteors, and mansions rising like exhalations.

J. P.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ACCOUNT OF THE AFRICAN INSTITUTION.

WE willingly lend our aid to give publicity in our pages to the following benevolent plan, to make some restitution to an injured race, long the victims to a cruel commerce. Such a plan is like a light seen at a distance, in a dark night, to cheer a weary traveller amid the severities of a winter tempest. It is a bright ray in the history of man, who is too often led astray by his passions, and his sordid interests.

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A number of Individuals deeply impressed with a sense of the enormous wrongs which the natives of Africa have suffered in their intercourse with Europe; and actuated by a desire to repair those wrongs, as well as by general feelings of benevolence, have been anxious to adopt such measures as may seem best calculated to promote their civilization and happiness. They, have, therefore formed themselves into a Society for that purpose, called the African Institution, and they earnestly solicit the aid of the humane and benevolent, in every part of the kingdom, in furtherance of their design.

The Abolition of the Slave Trade hitherto carried on by Great Britain, America, and Denmark, will, in a considerable degree remove the barrier which has so long obstructed the natural course of social improvement in Africa, and thus open a way for introducing the comforts and arts of a more civilized state of Society. The happiest effects may also be reasonably anticipated from diffusing useful knowledge, and exciting industry among the inhabitants of Africa; and from obtaining and circulating throughout this country, more ample and authentic information concerning the agricultural and commercial faculties of that